AL.2.1987-434

Management Performance Guide

Alberta
SOCIAL SERVICES

DDN
7283679

Staff
Development

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FOREWORD

This performance management guide and the Management Performance form are designed specifically for the Department of Social Services. The guide is intended to assist supervisors and their employees in the preparation and handling of Management Performance. If you require assistance or information concerning any aspect of the Management performance process please call the Consultant, Management Development, Staff Development Branch. (427-5949)

INTRODUCTION

The Government of Alberta has adopted results-based management as a system for assisting all employees in the public service to achieve organizational and individual goals more effectively.

The Department of Social Services has developed the Management Performance System (MPS) to assist managers and employees in developing a clear understanding of the goals they are to achieve and the means of appraising results relative to the specified goals. The performance management process provides opportunity for managers and each of their employees to a) jointly define the primary job activities or responsibilities of the employee, b) reach an understanding on goals and standards of performance expected of the employee for the performance period c) discuss plans for the employee's training and career development; d) periodically review the employee's progress toward the established goals and standards "... which may entail deletions or additions" and e) assess the employee's actual job performance in relation to the goals and standards previously set.

When the process of performance management is carried out in a positive and effective manner there are a number of benefits to the organization.

- Clearly defined work expectations and standards.
- Identified training and career development needs.
- Improved manager/employee communications.
- Better utilization of employee abilities.
- Aid in planning and budgeting.
- Identified individual strengths and weaknesses.
- A progressional record of individual performance.
- Aid in decisions on salary and promotion.

A primary consideration of the performance process is the continued growth and development of the employee. In addition to meeting organizational needs, the MPS can help to meet the employee's needs, which include:

- Agreement and understanding of what is expected on the job.
- Opportunity to achieve.
- Feedback on progress.
- Coaching or guidance when needed.
- Recognition for achievement.

PERFORMANCE PLANNING

(Goals, Standards and Training and Career Development Plan for the Coming Year)

GOALS AND STANDARDS PERFORMANCE

Either at job commencement, or at the beginning of the fiscal year, the supervisor with the participation of the employee will determine the employee's primary job activities or responsibilities, and develop goals and standards of performance, which spell out the specific results or outputs expected.

A goal is a quantified level of output which is mutually negotiated between the manager and the employee as part of Performance Planning. The employee has a degree of influence in establishing the level of output. However the ultimate responsibility lies with the supervisor.

The setting of a goal in a particular area implies that there is a service gap, that there is room for improvement. The negotiation then between the manager and the employee will determine how "wide" is the gap and "how much" can be achieved in the performance year. This agreement as to "how much" or "how far" becomes a goal.

An example is as follows:
"To ensure that District Office expenditures are within annual budget".

Note the clarity, focus and result expected. Note further that goals can be long term or short term depending on the nature and complexity of the work involved. The duration will be determined through discussion between the supervisor and employee. The important point is that the employee must have a commitment to the goals negotiated.

A standard is a specific level of output for a particular goal which is established by the supervisor. The employee may supply information, but the level of performance is set by the supervisor or the organization. e.g. with reference to the goal above, standards could be:

1. Budget forecasts to be within two per cent variance of actual expenditures.
2. Budget forecasts to be submitted within time deadlines.
3. Final expenditures within two per cent of approved budget.

The important point is that the **supervisor sets the standards.**

The process of setting unit and individual goals and standards can be enhanced by ensuring that all goals and standards meet the following criteria:

- Challenging.
- Measurable.
- Related to department and organization goals.
- Related to a specific time period.
- Achievable.
- Controllable.
- Results oriented.

There are three categories of Goals.

a. **MAINTENANCE**
These normally form the bulk of an employee's job and reflect the ongoing activities of the employee's responsibilities. Maintenance goals provide the foundation of an employee's efforts, **and full achievement of these goals is a basic requirement of satisfactory performance.**

b. **PROBLEM SOLVING**
These are goals designed to resolve existing areas of concern or to prevent the development of possible problem areas. Problem solving goals utilize creativity, energy and management skills. Achievement in this area **will have some bearing on any assessment of superior performance.**

c. **INNOVATIVE**
Goals in this area will reflect extreme creativity and entrepreneurship. Achievement of these goals will demonstrate the ability to create and manage opportunities, **and will have even stronger bearing on any assessment of superior performance.**

THE PERFORMANCE PLANNING PHASE (GOALS AND STANDARDS) should be completed by June 30th of the performance year.

TRAINING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Training is defined as all those activities which are designed to improve performance in the current job and focussed on specific objectives such as learning new skills, concepts or competencies. The function of training in the organization is to identify, develop and maintain those behaviours required of employees in order for the organization to achieve its goals.

Career development is defined as all those planned growth activities undertaken to provide employees with awareness, skills and knowledge to prepare them for changes in the organization and for increasing and/or changing responsibilties and duties. It is a process which may involve both individual and organizational input and which results in the individual having a broader range of education or experience. The individual's competence and potential promotability are enhanced. Aspects may include **Education** designed to improve the overall competence of the employee in a specific direction and beyond the job now held thus tending to focus on broader objectives such as attaining higher degree qualifications. This may be achieved through Educational assistance via education incentive or leave of absence. **Job enrichment** - that is the inclusion of additional responsibilities in an employee's job, usually long term. **Special assignment** - the assignment of special projects to an individual. These projects typically have specific terms of reference and end dates. Special Projects may be in addition to regular duties or, in areas such as meeting strategic needs, as a replacement of regular duties. **Rotation** - the transfer of a permanent employee to a position with different responsibilities to meet long term organizational development needs. Such moves may be on a permanent basis, or in the case of **Developmental assignments** for a fixed term.

As an integral step in Performance Planning, the supervisor and the employee will review and assess the employee's training needs, and identify possible career development activities for the coming performance period. The Recommendations for Training and Career Development Form, should be used for this purpose. The form is divided into six sections.

Section 1:

Management Effectiveness identifies a number of elements that portray an effective manager. The supervisor should in discussion with the employee check each item, reflecting the supervisor's assessment for the employee's present status in relation to the item. Place N/A against items that do not apply to the employee.

Section 2:

Specific Knowledge Areas Relative to Job
Key knowledge areas relative to the job should be identified and an assessment made (✓) by the supervisor of the employee's standing in these areas.

Section 3:

Recommendations for Training
Based on the assessments in Section (1) and (2): specific recommendations for Training should be recorded. These recommendations should be specific and should be priorized.
Whether the training planned includes basic management skills or more advanced programs, the manager's recommendations should be based on organizational needs and upon increasing the effectiveness of the employee's job performance. To assist in the development of a training proposal, identified training needs should be priorized using the following criteria:

Priority 1 -
Training is required, immediately, to provide the employee with skills or knowledge to improve the performance of his/her present duties. It is the manager's responsibility to secure the required organizational approval for training.

Priority 2 -
Training would be useful but is not required immediately, or is not absolutely necessary, for the performance of the employee's present duties.

Section 3:

Recommendations for Career Development
These would be suggestions, in discussion with the employee, that would serve to enhance the employee's career. They may involve Job Enrichment in present position, Special Assignment, Developmental Assignments or Rotation. The point is that career rejuvenation can come about through creative thinking. The suggestions agreed to by the supervisor and the employee should be recorded in Section 4.
Sections (5) and (6) are self explanatory.
The completed RECOMMENDATIONS for TRAINING and CAREER DEVELOPMENT FORM should be forwarded to Human Resources office by June 30th.

PROGRESS REVIEWS

The progress reviews provide an opportunity for both the manager and the employee to review results achieved by the employee in relation to goals and standards set at the beginning of the appraisal period or which require revision during the appraisal cycle.

The time period between progress reviews will vary according to the employee and the work itself. However it is expected that there will be two **formal** PROGRESS REVIEWS completed by October 31st and February 28th of the performance year. These formal reviews will be recorded in the appropriate sections of the performance form. The need for formal reviews does not interfere with the practice of ongoing contact and informal exchanges with the employee. On the contrary, formal reviews tend to reinforce these informal exchanges. Particularly with new employees frequent discussions may be necessary to explain requirements of the job and update goals and standards.

At the time of a progress review the supervisor should consider these key questions:

- Are the primary job activities or responsibilities of the employee unchanged?
- Are the agreed upon goals and standards still valid?
- What factors have helped or hindered results achieved?
- Have there been any changes in priorities?
- Should any changes be considered now?

In many situations there may be little deviation from plans. However, where conditions have affected performance and changes are indicated, goals and standards should be modified and noted in the progress review section of the performance form.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

The previous progress reviews carried out by the employee and manager help keep both informed of progress in relation to agreed upon goals. In addition to these on-going reviews, there is a need for an annual, formal, performance appraisal. It is the practice in the Department for the employee's manager to appraise the employee's performance at the end of the fiscal year. Performance appraisals must also be carried out at the time of transfer of either the employee or the supervisor.

PREPARATION FOR PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

A formal performance appraisal interview can be positive and rewarding or it can be an uncomfortable confrontation, depending on how well the manager and the employee have prepared for the interview. Since it is desirable that the formal appraisal should be mutually beneficial to the employee and the supervisor, it may be helpful to consider the following steps in preparation for the appraisal interview.

- The supervisor will set an appointment with the employee, by mutual agreement, at least one week in advance of the actual interview. Every effort should be made to keep this appointment. The supervisor should also provide the employee with an agenda for the meeting.
- The supervisor should provide the employee with a copy of the work unit goals and standards and the employee's goals and standards previously established. The supervisor should request the employee to study the unit performance expectations and to consider his or her contribution to their achievement. This is done prior to the formal meeting.

CONDUCTING THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL INTERVIEW

Important prerequisites for an appraisal interview are:

a. The supervisor will have arranged to hold the interview in an office where privacy is assured, and where the interview can be held without interruption.

b. The employee will have prepared a self-assessment of performance as a basis for discussion.

c. The supervisor will have prepared an assessment of results achieved by the employee in relation to agreed upon goals and standards of performance.

Although it is important that an employee's performance be adequately documented, it is the dialogue between the employee and manager that is the vital step in the performance appraisal process. In their discussion of the employee's performance, the employee and the supervisor should attempt to:

- Discuss and evaluate the overall performance of the employee in such a way that they both clearly understand the evaluation.
- Recognize the employee's progress, and discuss specific needs for improvement.
- Explore ways and means of developing and maintaining a positive working relationship.

The openness and honesty with which both persons are able to come to grips with their expectations of each other, and the genuiness of each person's interest in understanding the other's perspective are key elements in a successful performance appraisal interview. Above all the performance appraisal should be a developmental tool - a means for the manager to provide leadership and support, and - a means for the employee to achieve in the job and progress toward both job and career goals.

GOALS FOR THE COMING APPRAISAL PERIOD

During the performance appraisal interview the employee and the manager will probably discuss future goals and standards in a rather general manner. It is best that a detailed review of goals and standards for the upcoming appraisal period be the subject of a subsequent interview. This becomes an opportunity for the manager and the employee to "compare notes" as they work toward a set of goals and performance standards in relation to job performance, as well as a training and Career Development plan for the coming year.

In preparation for an interview with the employee concerning future goals, standards, and training plans, the supervisor should set a mutually convenient time and place and provide an agenda for the interview.

The supervisor should provide the employee with the work unit goals and standards for the coming year and invite the employee's comments. The employee should prepare for the interview by outlining his or her individual goals for the next appraisal period. During the interview, the goals and standards of performance for the employee will be determined, and plans will be made jointly for the employee's continued training and career development. This interview should be an opportunity for the supervisor to discuss ways and means by which he/she might assist the employee to achieve his or her performance goals.

COMPLETION OF THE MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE FORM

Part I - Identification Section

To be completed by supervisor. Note that Parts 1 and 2 are to be completed at the beginning of the appraisal period.

Part 2 -

Performance Planning Goals, Standards for the Coming Year. Complete Recommendations for Training and Career Development at this time.

Goals and Standards

Through discussion, the employee and manager will identify the primary job activities or responsibilities, and related performance goals and standards. The results expected should include indicators of successful completion and target dates for achievement. It is expected that the employee and supervisor will reach a consensus on goals with the supervisor setting clear performance standards. Be reminded again of the significance of goals in the MAINTENANCE, PROBLEM SOLVING AND INNOVATIVE AREAS.

Part 3 - Management Effectiveness Checklist

As part of the Performance Planning exercise the supervisor will **review** with the employee the checklist of skills in the areas of Management Effectiveness. No rating is given at this time. At each Progress review a discussion is held regarding the employee's performance in each skill area. This discussion is recorded **as part** of the Progress Review. Only at Appraisal is a rating given in each skill area, through a formal checkmark against each area. These ratings will be considered in the final assessment of the employee's overall performance.

Part 4 - Progress Reviews

The supervisor and employee meet at predetermined intervals to review the employee's performance. The supervisor will complete the section noting date of interview, general areas discussed, and specific changes in job content and performance goals and standards in the coming review period. **Discussion** of the employee's performance in relation to the Management Effectiveness Checklist is also recorded.

Part 5 - Results Achieved

A. **Goals and Standards**

The employee and the manager will review and discuss results achieved in relation to goals set during the appraisal period. The supervisor will indicate to the employee those work assignments or projects completed by the employee which demonstrated his/her capability and willingness to assume positions of greater responsibility. The Management Effectiveness checklist is also completed.

b. **Training and Career Development**

The manager will indicate all training and Career Development activities the employee has undertaken during the appraisal period, including training taken on the employee's own initiative. The manager should comment on the effect of training on the employee's achievement of goals and standards.

Part 6 - Assessment of Performance

The results achieved in relation to the established goals and standards should be the primary basis for the supervisor's overall assessment of the employee's performance. In this regard consideration should also be given to the employee's performance in relation to the skill areas in the Management Effectiveness check list. Attention should also be given to achievement in the MAINTENANCE, PROBLEM SOLVING and INNOVATIVE GOALS AREAS.

The assessment should be discussed with the employee, who should be invited to comment on the assessment. The signatures of the employee and the supervisor indicate that assessment has been personally discussed and understood.

Note: It is mandatory that before a final rating is communicated to the employee, the supervisor must confer with his or her immediate supervisor, regarding the recommended rating which must have Deputy Minister's approval before final communication of the decision to the employee.

Part 7 - Review of Assessment

In order to enhance consistency and objectivity of appraisals, the assessment of performance is reviewed by the next level of supervision. The responsibility of the reviewer is to:

a. Ensure that the appraisal is completed fairly and accurately.
b. Rule on items of disagreement between the employee and the supervisor.
c. Make decisions on recommendations by the supervisor which are beyond his/her scope or authority.

COMPLETION DEADLINES

Management performance appraisals are to be completed during the month of May each year.

During the month, the supervisor will:

1. Complete, sign and forward the MPS form for the past performance year.

ROUTING OF COMPLETED FORMS

The original of the completed Management Performance form is to be forwarded to the Human Resources Division not later than May 31st.

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